AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 39-41, amend claims 22, 24-25, and 34, and add claim 42 as follows:

1-21. (canceled)

22. (currently amended) A biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition comprising:

a cross-linked gelatin sponge; and

a wetting agent;

wherein the wetting agent is coated on at least a substantial portion of the surface of the gelatin sponge; and

wherein the wetting agent ~~facilitates spreading and penetration of an aqueous solution into the gelatin sponge thereby decreasing a~~ decreases hydration time of the gelatin sponge.

23. (previously presented) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition of Claim 22, wherein the gelatin composition is bioabsorbable.

24. (currently amended) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition of Claim 22, wherein the wetting agent is an anionic ~~surfactant~~ wetting agent.

25. (currently amended) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition of Claim ~~24~~ 22, wherein the wetting agent is selected from the group consisting of ~~polyoxyalkylenes,~~ ether capped polyoxyalkylenes, ester capped polyoxyalkylenes, polyethylene oxides, carboxymethyl cellulose, polyvinyl alcohol, polyvinyl pyrrolidone, sorbitan esters, phosphatides, alkyl amines, and glycerin.

26. (previously presented) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition of Claim 22, wherein the wetting agent is selected from the group consisting of alkyl (C_6-C_{20}) sulfate salts, aryl (C_6-C_{10}) sulfate salts, and alkaryl (C_7-C_{24}) sulfate salts.

27. (previously presented) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition of Claim 22, wherein the gelatin composition comprises from about 0.01 to about 5 weight percent of the wetting agent.

28. (previously presented) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition of Claim 22, wherein the wetting agent is coated on at least a substantial portion of the surface of the gelatin sponge by soaking the gelatin sponge in a coating solution including the wetting agent and a solvent, followed by evaporation of the solvent from the coating solution.

29. (previously presented) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition of Claim 28, wherein the coating solution comprises from about 0.01 to about 20 weight percent of the wetting agent.

30. (previously presented) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition of Claim 22, wherein the gelatin composition is sterilized and packaged for use in surgical procedures.

31. (previously presented) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin of Claim 22, wherein the gelatin composition further comprises a growth factor.

32. (previously presented) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin of Claim 22, wherein the gelatin composition further comprises a thrombus enhancing agent.

33. (previously presented) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin of Claim 22, wherein the gelatin composition further comprises an antimicrobial agent.

34. (currently amended) A method for decreasing the hydration time of a biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition, comprising the steps of:

providing an aqueous solution;

providing a cross-linked gelatin composition including a cross-linked gelatin sponge and a wetting agent, wherein the wetting agent is coated on at least a substantial portion of the surface of the gelatin sponge and ~~facilitates spreading and penetration of the aqueous solution into the gelatin sponge, thereby decreasing a~~ decreases hydration time of the gelatin sponge; and

contacting the gelatin composition with the aqueous solution.

35. (previously presented) The method of Claim 34, wherein the wetting agent is coated on at least a substantial portion of the surface of the gelatin sponge by soaking the gelatin sponge in a coating solution including the wetting agent and a solvent, and evaporation of the solvent from the coating solution.

36. (previously presented) The method of Claim 35, wherein the coating solution comprises from about 0.01 to about 20 weight percent of the wetting agent.

37. (previously presented) The method of Claim 34, wherein the gelatin composition comprises from about 0.01 to about 5 weight percent of the wetting agent.

38. (previously presented) The method of Claim 34, wherein the gelatin composition is bioabsorbable.

39-41. (cancelled)

42. (new) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition of Claim 22, wherein the wetting agent is selected from a group consisting of polyoxyalkylenes.